



Ifimes

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The International Institute for Middle-East and Balkan Studies (**IFIMES**) in Ljubljana, Slovenia, regularly analyses events in the Middle East and the Balkans. In view of the unsuccessful accession of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the European Union IFIMES has prepared an analysis of the current political events in that country. The most relevant and interesting sections from the comprehensive analysis are given below.

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

POSTPONED DECISION TO REMOVE DODIK AND SILAJDŽIĆ?

In the first months of 2008, the political situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina has become even more complex due to the country's obviously unsuccessful accession to the European Union which is evident from the failure of the Parliament to adopt the key act on police reform despite the high level of political consensus achieved between the main political actors at the informal level through the so called Mostar Declaration which was signed by six governing political parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina. For certain political forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina the police reform apparently does not represent an important step to be taken by the state in order to enable the signing of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) with the EU. Traditionally, the rating of political parties is more important in Bosnia and Herzegovina than the stability and prosperity of the state. For example, the Party of Democratic Action (SDA) withdrew from the Mostar Declaration which does not comply with the three previously announced European principles, thus pouring oil on political flames in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, where the former "hero" of rejecting constitutional reforms in 2006 Haris Silajdžić has become the new political target. The compromise made in 2006 was then fatal for Sulejman Tihić (SDA), while this time the same might happen to the Party for BiH (SBIH) President Silajdžić. This has left his deputies in the BiH Parliament confused, not knowing whether to listen to their rigid leader or trust their own senses. Thus they have blocked the reform of proposed police laws which do not comply with three European principles.

Only a few months prior to these agreement, the Alliance of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD) President Milorad Dodik and Haris Silajdžić (SBIH) were about to be discharged from their responsibilities and limited in their further political activities. The main reason for not realising their removal was the resolution of the final status of Kosovo since the international community wanted to avoid creating further tensions in Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, after Kosovo proclaimed its independence on 17 February 2008, some members of the international community have recalled the possibility of removing Dodik and Silajdžić.

DODIK AND SILAJDŽIĆ – FADING LEADERS

In order to prevent his removal, Dodik had to provide guarantee to the international representatives that despite the open opposition of Serbs in Bosnia and Herzegovina to the independence of Kosovo he would prevent the spreading of riots in the Republic of Srpska with political actions and with the support of the police which used brutal force against the protestors in Banja Luka. This strengthened Dodik's position in the international community and temporarily postponed the decision on his removal from political life, while his position as the leader of Serbs in Bosnia and Herzegovina weakened.

On the other hand, Silajdžić prevented his own removal by having diametrically changed his opinion. Thus, he now agrees that the police of Republic of Srpska remains a constituent element of the newly reformed police structure of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which incited strong revolt among the Bosniaks and weakened the political power and influence of this - until very recently - upright Bosniak leader.

All this has proven earlier analyses made by the IFIMES International Institute stating that Dodik and Silajdžić co-ordinated their activities when they found it useful, making radical changes even at the detriment of the interests of their own nations in order to preserve their political positions and avoid (postpone) their removal. It is obvious what kind of profile these politicians represent. Dodik and Silajdžić are no exception nor surprise, they merely represent the established political practice in this chaotic country. There are simply no limits as to the deceptions which the politicians in Bosnia and Herzegovina are ready to avail themselves of.

FIGHTING DODIK'S AND SILAJDŽIĆ'S "CONSTRUCTION WORKERS"

Dodik's and Silajdžić's attempts to present themselves to the international community as advocates of justice and fighters against organised crime and corruption have proven to be nothing but empty words. Any such concrete intentions would require dealing with large-scale organised crime and even with some of their closest collaborators and friends from major construction companies whom they granted almost all main tenders and even smaller-scale projects. Unfortunately, Bosnia and Herzegovina will have to wait a long time until such true fight against organised crime might be realised. It will have to wait until a new generation of politicians without any past burdens or connections related to organised crime take over the helm, which certainly can not be expected of Dodik and Silajdžić nor of many others in their circles.

The IFIMES International Institute is of the opinion that an increasing number of people in Bosnia and Herzegovina believes Dodik and Silajdžić will only remain in power until the signing of SAA, after which they will, due to numerous burdens they have been encumbered with, no longer be interesting politicians for the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as for the international community.

Analysts have raised the question as to what would be the political alternative to present political parties such as SNSD in the Republic of Srpska and SBiH in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina among the Serbian and Bosniak nations.

It would be very dangerous for the country to turn back to the worn out nationalist politics represented by the Serb Democratic Party (SDS), Party of Democratic Progress (PDP), Party of Democratic Action (SDA), Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ BiH) and HDZ 1990.

The only appropriate alternative for Bosnia and Herzegovina would be to opt for moderate political parties which have always had a positive position on key national as well as European values and which have never supported exclusive/extremist politics. Unfortunately those parties have always been exposed to pressures and various forms of extortion from the major political parties which have continuously used nationalism as their main asset, forcing the moderate political forces to remain in the political background. The moderate political options in the Republic of Srpska were the Socialist Party (SP) and parts of SNSD which have been stifled by dominant lobbyists protecting their interests through this party. Gradually SNSD became the party protecting the interests of capital owners instead of protecting the citizens, especially the socially deprived, as is the usual practice in other European social democratic parties.

A moderate political option in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina is the Social Democratic Party (SDP). However, it inevitably has to change its top leaders who should be oriented to more moderate ideas and open dialogue at the level of the state in order to introduce European democratic principles in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Several times SDP has been the driver of political conflicts, which have not helped Bosnia and Herzegovina to become stronger nor enabled SDP to improve its position.

In the Croatian political block there have been some attempts to move away from the right-handed HDZ BiH and HDZ 1990 and to emphasise the new essential dimension of Croatian policy in Bosnia and Herzegovina, with the emergence of the Croat Peasant Party – New Croat Initiative (HSS-NHI) and partly also the Work for Prosperity ("Radom za boljitak") party.

Unofficially, the campaign for local elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina which are to be held in October 2008 has already started.

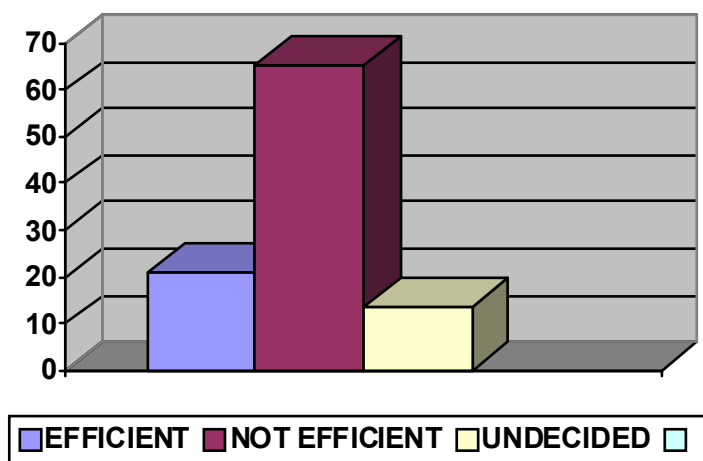
According to the data on corruption Bosnia and Herzegovina is the 84th of all together 179 countries which were included in the survey on corruption. Thus Bosnia and Herzegovina is ranked at the same position as Gabon, Jamaica, Montenegro, Lesotho, Maldives, Kiribati, Swaziland, Thailand and Macedonia (Source: Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index 2007).

Data on the sample:

- The sample: random, three-stage
- Size of the sample: 770 respondents (male and female citizens of lawful age)
- Methodology: telephone survey
- Period: March 24 to 28, 2008
- Degree of reliability: 95%
- Control: per 10% specimens
- Standard deviation +/- 3
- Territory: the Republic of Srpska (BiH)

- HOW EFFICIENT ARE THE CURRENT AUTHORITIES IN THE REPUBLIC OF SRPSKA IN FIGHTING ORGANISED CRIME AND CORRUPTION?

- EFFICIENT	21,10 %
- NOT EFFICIENT	65,30 %
- UNDECIDED	13,60 %

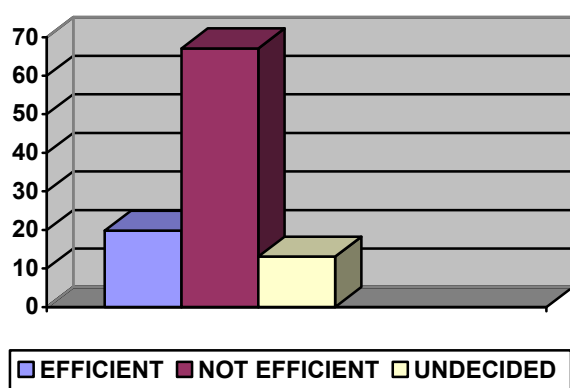


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- **HOW EFFICIENT ARE THE CURRENT AUTHORITIES IN THE FEDERATION OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA IN FIGHTING ORGANISED CRIME AND CORRUPTION?**

- EFFICIENT	19,80 %
- NOT EFFICIENT	67,10 %
- UNDECIDED	13,10 %



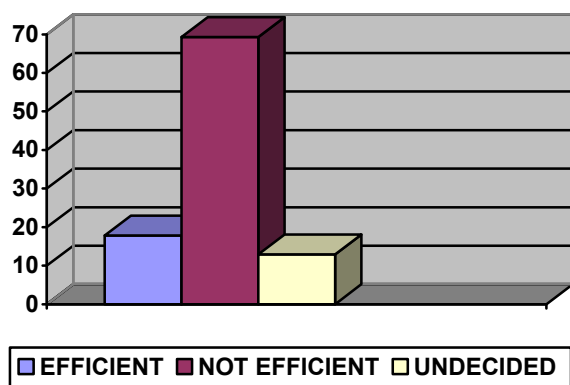
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- Period: March 24 to 28, 2008
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- Territory: the Republic of Srpska (BiH)

- **HOW EFFICIENT IS THE EMPLOYMENT POLICY OF THE CURRENT AUTHORITIES IN THE REPUBLIC OF SRPSKA?**

- EFFICIENT	17,80 %
- NOT EFFICIENT	69,30 %
- UNDECIDED	12,90 %

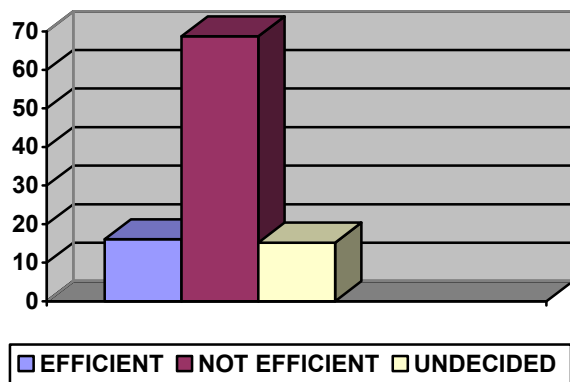


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- Methodology: telephone survey
- Period: March 24 to 28, 2008
- Degree of reliability: 95%
- Control: per 10% specimens
- Standard deviation +/- 3
- Territory: the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH)

- **HOW EFFICIENT IS THE EMPLOYMENT POLICY OF THE CURRENT AUTHORITIES IN THE FEDERATION OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA?**

- EFFICIENT	16,10 %
- NOT EFFICIENT	68,70 %
- UNDECIDED	15,20 %



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